

CANADIAN - WOMEN'S - INSTITUTES

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Conservation and Education Were Outstanding Topics at Quebec Convention

The fifth annual convention of the Quebec Homemakers' Clubs met at Macdonald College on June 12th and 13th. Sixty-four members were in attendance, representing all but two of the thirty-seven clubs.

In the absence of Dr. Harrison at Petawawa, the delegates were welcomed by Prof. Lochhead, who said that he was glad to welcome them for two reasons at least; first, that they represented the new spirit in the progress of Quebec, and secondly, because of their potential power as an organization representing the rural women. He commended the clubs for their war work. One of the finest things in this war had been the service of women, who, in a spirit of self-effacement, had done wonderful service in every kind of work. He hoped that there might be some means of organization whereby the women of the towns might aid the rural women, bringing about a better understanding and raising the standards of living in both town and country.

Mrs. Yeats, of Dunham, replied to the address, and believed that the clubs were realizing more deeply the significance of their motto, "For Home and Country," and that not only in their more individual work as homemakers, but in the broader duties relating to the school and community, and now more particularly since the granting of the franchise, women must study and strive to prepare themselves for the great opportunities that were theirs.

Mrs. N. C. Macfarlane, demonstrator to the clubs, then read her report as follows:

The year 1917-18 has been for the Quebec Homemakers' Club one of marked activity and progress. The clubs recognize as never before the importance of their object, not only in respect to the home and community, but to that larger collection of homes and communities—the nation. "The object of the Homemakers' Clubs shall be to study the most scientific way of conducting home work in order to economize, strengthen and preserve the health of the family; to discuss the best expenditure of money in order to secure the highest conditions of home life; to provide better financial, social and intellectual advantages for farm boys and girls and yet keep them on the farm; to carry on any line of work which has for its object the welfare of home or community life."

In connection with the first clause of this object, the club members are making every effort consistent with doing their share of the necessary war work to become more thoroughly acquainted with the subjects of food and food preparation, the school lunch, sanitation, medical inspection, household financing and the better arrangement of work in order to save time and energy. The studies in respect to foods have been well supplemented with practical demonstrations, that on canning being especially appreciated, as a factor not only in preventing waste, but by insuring the housekeeper a means of having a supply of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the year, a most important one in maintaining the health of the family.

To aid in the matter of food control, the secretaries of the clubs have been placed on the mailing list of the Canada Food Board, and all important items from the Canadian Food Bulletin are read and discussed by the clubs for the purpose of fulfilling the demands and requests of the office as intelligently as possible. When any announcement is not fully understood, the secretary is requested to write directly to the office for information. Constructive and not destructive criticism is the object of the clubs. Forty practical demonstrations on the making of meat and wheat substitutes were given to the Quebec Homemakers' Clubs and other organizations by Miss Babb, assistant demonstrator. From their previous studies along the lines of food and nutrition, the clubs were well prepared to use the advice and instruction given to the best advantage, and reports show that the demonstrations were of real help to the housekeepers in their efforts to aid in conservation and substitution. This year the clubs are planning a gardening campaign, from which we hope to hear results at the next convention.

The many applications for literature from the Circulating Library on the subject of household accounts proves that the second phase of our aim is not neglected and that we are awakening to our responsibilities as consumers. Let us repeat once more that it is more important to teach a woman

how to spend a dollar wisely than to tell her to save it, for wise spending is the truest conservation, and we can only spend wisely when we have a knowledge of food values, textiles and household furnishings, nor should we neglect to make a comparison in our budget between the amount spent for material comforts and that spent for the higher things of life, such as education, both mental and spiritual, of the children of to-day, who are to be the citizens of to-morrow.

The School Fair work, which will in the long run greatly help to keep the boys and girls on the farm by arousing their interest in and creating a greater respect for the professions of homemaking and agriculture, received even more than its usual share of attention, many of the clubs assisting with the prize list and doing a great deal to encourage the children

lining. One sees a vision of days after the war, when this same spirit of patriotism will be directed toward the improvement of the schools and other essentials to the welfare of the rural community.

Last year an appeal was made that an effort be put forth to induce every woman in each vicinity where there was already a club to become a member and thus declare herself an ally of those who had banded themselves together under the motto, "For Home and Country." The reports show an increase in membership of 210, but there is still much to be done. We recommend that the clubs make a list of the women in their respective districts, in order that they may keep before them a constant appeal for their help and support in this work. The aim of our society is such that, if fully understood, no woman in any district can afford to

do without us, nor can we afford to do without her. It was also advised that at least two meetings a year be devoted to subjects relating to education, that the men of the community be invited to attend and, whenever possible, leading educationists be invited to address these meetings. The reports show that there has been a great deal more co-operation between the men and women in the rural work, but very little was reported in respect to meetings suggested.

Owing to pressure of work due to war conditions and the increase of School Fair projects, no organization work could be planned by the demonstrator, and the five new clubs organized this year owe their existence largely to the efforts of individual club officers and others interested in rural work, who succeeded in interesting the women of these districts to the extent of calling

ing a meeting, at which the demonstrator and the officers of leading clubs were given an opportunity to present the aims of the organization.

In this coming year we feel that considerable time must be set aside for further organization. In the opening years of the war, Red Cross and other obvious forms of patriotic work absorbed the attention of people so completely that for a time it was almost forgotten that the Homemakers' aims were as truly patriotic as those of any other society. Our efforts along this line usually met with the remark: "Oh, the war will soon be over, and then we shall concentrate our efforts on the home and community." But the war has gone on, and the events of the past year have made it plain to the most skeptical that the homemaker has a large, distinct and important part to play in deciding the issue of this great struggle. The three important factors in the winning of this war are man-power, sufficient food, and money. In these days of conservation of food, clothing, everything, in fact, that will provide for our armies overseas and money to buy Victory Bonds, the nation turns to the homemaker. She is ready and eager to do her part, but alas she has been untrained for her profession. In the majority of cases she knows as little of food values as the clerk from the store knew about military drill. When the civilian is asked to serve his country in the capacity of a soldier, he is put under competent officers and thoroughly drilled for his work. Is it demanding too much that in future our homemakers be drilled for their work—the homemakers who have in their charge the army of the coming generation, whose duty it is to build up a strong and united Empire? In the meantime we have organizations such as the Homemakers' Clubs, upheld and supported by the Schools of Household Science. With these clubs it should be a matter of duty to extend their influence and do all possible to assist the homemakers of the Province.

The problems of homemaking, which involve all the important questions relating to conservation to-day, were studied by our clubs and similar organizations in other provinces before the demands of the war made food control necessary. As a natural result, we were already prepared to co-operate in a practical way with the authorities of the Food Board.

Here in our Province the Homemakers' Clubs were the first organizations to receive practical demonstrations on school lunches; one of the most important types of conservation, viz., conserving the health of the child; the canning of fruits and vegetables and the making of meat and wheat sub-

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BINBROOK, ONTARIO, WOMEN'S INSTITUTE.

This Institute has adopted a Belgian hill and is keeping two prisoners of war in addition to the regular Red Cross and patriotic work.

to exhibit at the fairs. The Macdonald College demonstrators to the Quebec Homemakers' Clubs, co-operating with the Government demonstrators and the Macdonald College demonstrators for rural schools, gave nearly four months of their time to this work. Sixty-eight practical demonstrations on bread-making, cake-making and canning were given in the schools at various centres throughout the province. The School Fair Cookery Bulletin was revised and a new edition published.

It is now three years since the Homemakers' Clubs in Pontiac County, believing that the girls should have an equal opportunity with the boys for instruction in school fair work, arranged that demonstrations be given in the schools. At that time very few fairs were held in the province, but the work has increased so rapidly that the demonstrators to the Quebec Homemakers' Clubs find that in the past year they have had to encroach on the time which should have been devoted to club work, and as both are of equal importance, we hope that sufficient help may be obtained to sustain each.

The Travelling Libraries established in October, 1914, were called in and checked over. No books were missing and no damage was done other than the ordinary wear and tear to either books or cases. The library records showed that in all 520 books had been loaned since that time to the members. We urge that clubs which have not already made use of the Travelling Library should place their names without delay on the waiting list. These libraries contain the standard works on household science subjects and every homemaker should make an effort to do some reading along these lines every year. We note with pleasure that the clubs at Stark's Corners and Wyman are starting libraries for the use of their own clubs. We suggest that they arrange to have their librarian's name on the mailing list of the Publication Departments at Washington and Ottawa, in order that they may receive the list of monthly publications and add to their library anything which may be of value to them. Many of these bulletins are inexpensive, and contain a vast amount of information in an easily digested form.

The reports of the respective clubs show no diminution of effort in regard to Red Cross and other patriotic endeavors. The value of the work done, together with the amount of money contributed, represents a total well over \$4,000.00. Despite the deep gloom of the war cloud, when one reads a report showing how a small group of a dozen or more busy rural women, who rise with the sun and cease not their labors until long after its going down, have raised two hundred dollars for Red Cross purposes and knit numerous pairs of socks as well, it is impossible not to see the silver